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'Je ne me réputerai totalement mourir': Tense, Death, Survival in Rabelais's *Pantagruel*[1]

Rabelais's imaginings of possible posthumous presence draw upon an extraordinary range of narrative, rhetorical, and indeed grammatical resources, of which tense is one of the most fundamental and so least immediately visible.[2] It is both a discreet grammatical pulse fostering, amongst other things, certain kinds of posthumous presence and also, within Rabelais's outlandish *elocutio*, an expressive tool for making such presence disturb or console protagonists and reader.[3]

1 Abbreviations used: COND PR = Conditionnel Présent; F = Futur; IMP = Imparfait; P = Perfectum; PC = Passé Composé; PR = Présent; PS = Passé Simple.

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2 Rabelais's uses of tense have received relatively little attention. Existing discussions include Eric MacPhail, 'The Ethic of Timing and the Origin of the Novel: Speaking Too Soon in Rabelais and Cervantes', *Symposium* 52 (1998), 155–64; François Rigolot, *Les Langages de Rabelais* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972), 100–1, 110, 134–5. Tense-choice is not discussed in Mireille Huchon, *Rabelais grammairien: de l'histoire du texte aux problèmes d'authenticité*, Études Rabelaisiennes, XVI (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1981) or in Emmanuelle Lacore-Martin, *Figures de l'histoire et du temps dans l'oeuvre de Rabelais* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2011). Some of Rabelais's correspondence serves as a corpus in Marie-Eve Ritz and Patrick Caudal, 'Preterit and Present Perfect in Middle French Texts', n. d., accessed 4 April, 2012, http://makino.linguist.univ-paris-diderot.fr/files/tameal/RitzCaudal_ALS09.pdf.

3 So this essay, like my understanding of early modern French literature, is profoundly indebted to the person who introduced me in an enduringly inspiring way to Rabelais, rhetoric, and much else: the volume's dedicatee.

Rabelais's striking images of posthumous survival are imitated from both the Bible and ancient 'pagan' writings. The biblical motifs – of living stones and of the son as the father's image – will be encountered below. Like them, the 'pagan' ones used are strikingly corporeal; unlike the father/son image, they present fragments rather than wholes as living on. Several such images are of parts, attributes, or products of the human body that continue to communicate after the expiration of their owner or producer. In the *Quart livre* episode in which Pantagruel and his friends hear at sea the thawing of some words, shouts, and noises that had frozen during a recent battle, Pantagruel wonders wistfully whether the sounds are the very ones made by the severed, still singing head of Orpheus and by the strings of his floating lyre that are now played by the wind rather than by the dead musician's fingers;[4] the frozen words also remind Pantagruel of Antiphanes's comparison between Plato's addresses to his pupils and words that freeze on people's lips in a certain very cold city - Plato's words 'thaw' when his pupils grow old enough to understand them.[5]

Rabelais's tenses constantly and largely unobtrusively ascribe degrees of presence to certain kinds of dead people, especially ancients, whose texts or textually recorded actions thus, to adopt the terms of the frozen words episode, 'thaw out' in the narrative present.[6] Rabelais's basic economy of tenses is characteristic of humanistic Middle French. He uses the Passé Simple in order to represent *exempla* of ancient and other deeds as being grounded in historical fact. By contrast, the Passé Composé is the tense that creates a bridge between the deeds' status as fact (vouchsafed by the Passé

4 See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XI.50–3; Virgil, *Georgics* IV. 523–7.

5 Pantagruel does not mention Rabelais's source, which is Plutarch, *On Progress in Virtue* VII (*Moralia* 79A). For these two examples, see *Quart livre*, in F. Rabelais, *Les Cinq Livres*, ed. Jean Céard, Gérard Defaux, and Michel Simonin (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1994), 1155. All references to *Pantagruel*, *Gargantua*, the *Tiers livre*, and the *Quart livre* are to this edition.

6 My approach thus develops in a complementary but different direction André Tournon's argument that the frozen words episode represents Rabelais's own text as thawed, 'agile', evangelically animated by the spirit rather than rigidified by the letter: A. Tournon, *'En sens agile': les acrobaties de l'esprit selon Rabelais* (Paris: H. Champion, 1995), 9–16, esp. 13.

Simple) and their exemplary efficacity in the present. When Pantagruel advises Panurge to draw Homeric and Virgilian lots to help him decide whether to marry, the two lists of Passé Simple *exempla* illustrating these authors' divinatory power are each prefaced by a Passé Composé: 'Car comme par sors Homericques souvent on a rencontré [PC] sa destinée: [...]. Aussi par sors Virgilianes ont esté congneues [PC] anciennement et preveues choses insignes et cas de grande importance, voir jusques à obtenir l'empire Romain, comme advint [PS] à Alexandre Severe, qui rencontra PS] [...]'.[7] Here as so often, the Passé Composé combines the function of temporal bridge with that of global summary. The circuit is typically completed by the Présent or Futur (and in this case an imperative), which 'thaw out' the *exempla* in the here and now: 'Apportez moy les oeuvres de Virgile et [...] explorerons [FUT] [...] le sort futur de vostre mariage. [...]'; 'Il denote [PR] que [...]'.[8]

On the other hand, Rabelais also parodies this humanistic economy of tenses, thereby unsettling the foundation of its standard, *exemplum*-based resuscitations of the dead. What if the Passé Simple does not after all guarantee the facticity of the events to which it refers? Eric MacPhail and François Rigolot have already drawn attention to the undermining of this tense's epistemological credentials that occurs when it is stretched hyperbolically at the Council of War of the self-styled world conqueror Picrochole. He and his advisors use the Passé Simple in place of the Futur when imagining their future triumphs; the latter are so inevitable that they might as well have happened already: 'Ne vous fournirent-ils [PS] de vin à suffisance? Voire mais, dit-il nous ne beûmes [PS] point frais'.[9] One might add that this imitates the tense-substitution with which one of Picrochole's models, Hannibal, also anticipated victory (in Livy's account).[10] Moreover, Hannibal's verbal trick was identified by Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus as one

7 *Tiers livre*, 607–9.

8 Ibid., 607, 619.

9 *Gargantua*, 169. See MacPhail, 'The Ethic of Timing', 160–1; Rigolot, *Les Langages de Rabelais*, 134–5.

10 Livy XXI.43.2. Livy has Hannibal tell his troops 'we conquered' ('vicimus') instead of the expected 'we will conquer' (*vincemus*).

example of the kind of tense-substitution that Rabelais also uses elsewhere and that Thomas Linacre identifies as the grammatical figure of *temporum enallage*.[11]

The humanistic economy of tenses is further parodied when the Passé Simple acts as block rather than bridge between past and present. In the midst of the *exemplum*-aided efforts to decide whether Panurge should marry, Rabelais reverses the Passé Composé's usual, past-animating function within the system of exemplarity by making death, not life, that which the Passé Composé carries over from past to present: 'Vous voulez doncques (dist Panurge, fillant les moustaches de sa barbe) que j'espouse la femme forte descripte par Solomon? Elle est morte [PC]: sans poinct de faulte. Je ne la veid [PS] oncques, que je saiche'.[12] The joke is that this woman was in any case more type than token in Proverbs (31.10). By having Panurge confuse type and token (or pretend to), Rabelais unsettles the grammatical foundations of humanist moral exemplarity.[13] This declaration of an exemplar's death implies *a contrario* that the numerous ancient exemplars represented by the text as being efficacious in the present are supposedly 'alive' in some sense.

So Rabelais both deploys and parodies a characteristically humanistic economy of tenses that builds bridges between the living and the dead. It includes a sharp distinction between the two tenses - Passé Simple and Passé Composé - that were the Middle French equivalents of Latin's single Perfectum. That distinction was not the same as it is today: Rabelais's Passé Composé is more often perfectal (meaning roughly 'I have made'

11 See D. Erasmus, *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum commentarii duo* [1512–] (Cologne: Gautier Fabricius, 1560), 71 (with no identification of the source); L. Valla, *De latinae linguae elegantia lib. VI* [first version 1441] (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1541), 220. Rabelais refers to Linacre in another context in the *Quart livre* (1211). The two works in which Linacre discusses *temporum enallage* are the *Rudimenta grammatices* (first version with this title 1519) and the *De emendata structura latini sermonis* (1524).

12 *Tiers livre*, 739.

13 On Renaissance exemplarity and its problems, see Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); John D. Lyons, *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

rather than 'I made') than is today's, whereas on the other hand his Passé Simple is not limited to a formal or written register or to the third person as today's usually is.[14]

However, Rabelais's economy of tenses is not entirely unobtrusive, but gets stretched and tested, becoming increasingly rhetorical as well as grammatical, in those sequences where Rabelais's exploration of posthumous survival or non-survival is particularly intense. Two sequences stand out, one of which I examine here:[15] the opening chapters of *Pantagruel* (1532), where Pantagruel's mother dies in childbirth (Chapter 3), before as an adolescent he visits the tomb of an ancestor (Chapter 5) and receives a letter from his father in which the latter imagines his own postmortem existence (Chapter 8).

* * *

The opening chapters of *Pantagruel* famously explore the transgenerational relation between death and new life by describing first the actual death of the eponymous baby giant's mother (Badebec) and then, when Pantagruel is an adolescent, the projected death of his father (Gargantua). These two prominent junctures within the main narrative of Pantagruel's life sandwich a third episode – his visit to an ancestor's tomb – which has a more minor, digressive role within the narrative structure: it occurs (taking up just a few lines) in a break that Pantagruel takes during his tour of French universities. But its very brevity and incidental, quasi-enigmatic status,

14 On the Passé Composé and Passé Simple in Middle and early Modern French, see Nathalie Fournier, *Grammaire du français classique* (Paris: Belin, 1998), Chapter 18 and 413–16; Robert Martin, *Temps et aspect: essai sur l'emploi des temps narratifs en moyen français* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), 383–98; Marc Wilmet, *Le Système de l'indicatif en moyen français: étude des 'tiroirs' de l'indicatif dans les farces, sotties et moralités françaises des XVe et XVIe siècles* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1970), 275–324.

15 I will study elsewhere the other particularly striking example, the sequence that starts almost a quarter of the way into the *Quart livre* (full version 1552), in which first the giant Bringuenarilles dies (Chapter 17), then Pantagruel and friends almost perish in a storm at sea (Chapters 18–24) before visiting the island of the Macraeons where old heroes and demigods do perish, which prompts the friends to discuss the deaths of Guillaume Du Bellay, of Pan, and of Christ (Chapters 25–8).

combined with the way in which it resonates with the preceding and ensuing evocations of the deaths of Pantagruel's parents, make it communicate something unsettling about the continuing presence of the dead.

When Badebec has died, the rhetorical purpose of her husband Gargantua's lament is to park her firmly in heaven so that he can get on with his own life and so that, on another level, Rabelais's narrative can continue. As in so much funerary writing of the period, the Présent of postmortem life in heaven is offered up as dispelling the need for grief:

> Ma femme est morte [PC], et bien; par dieu, je ne la ressusciterai pas par mes pleurs; elle est [PR] bien, elle est [PR] en paradis, pour le moins, si mieux ne est; elle prie [PR] dieu pour nous; elle est [PR] bienheureuse; elle ne se soucie [PR] plus de nos misères et calamités [...].[16]

The semantically elastic Passé Composé of *mourir* ('Ma femme est morte') is stretched here in the direction of imperfective presence ('my wife is in a state of being dead') as opposed to preterite perfectivity ('my wife died') by the five ensuing occurrences of the Présent, some involving repetition of 'est' ('she *is* in a state of being dead, she *is* fine, she *is* in Paradise ...'). In other words, the Passé Composé virtually becomes a Présent + Adjective here, whereas in the more intense grief of the chapter's opening its reference was more past-oriented and indeed perfective (her death as a completed action rather than a liminal state she is now in), because it was immediately followed by the Imparfait and the Passé Simple: 'Ma tant bonne femme est morte [PC], qui était [IMP] la plus ceci et cela qui fut [PS] on monde'.[17] This substitution of demonstrative pronouns for descriptions is part of this episode's parody of the rhetoric of grief, as is the mechanical anaphora (five occurrences of 'elle') and hyperbole ('en paradis, pour le moins') that are used when standard topics are reeled off in the long quotation above. Deaths that do not involve heroic males attract in the chronicles this kind of rhetorical parody.[18] By contrast, the deaths of heroic males such

16 *Pantagruel*, 315.
17 Ibid., 313.
18 E.g. *Pantagruel*, 503; *Quart livre*, 945.

as Gargantua (when he imagines his post-death future), Guillaume Du Bellay, and Christ are recounted in an elevated, non-parodic register that, while being in characteristic Rabelaisian tension with what surrounds it, does communicate profound grief (in the cases of Du Bellay and Christ).[19]

Unlike the posthumous survival of those heroic males, that of Badebec is confined entirely to heaven. Her earthly presence is sealed off by the perfectivity of the Passé Simple forms that frame the eight-line epitaph drafted by Grandgousier:

> Elle en mourut [PS], la noble Badebec,
> Du mal d'enfant, que tant me semblait [IMP] nice;
> [...]
> Priez à dieu, qu'à elle soit propice,
> Lui pardonnant, s'en rien outrepassa;
> Ci gît [PR] son corps, onquel vesquit [PS] sans vice,
> Et mourut [PS] l'an et jour que trépassa [PS].[20]

This Passé Simple perfectivity characterizes numerous epitaphs of the period, but it is enhanced here by its position at the very end of the chapter devoted to Badebec's death, as well as by the tautology of the verbs in the parodic last line. Like authors of real-world epitaphs, Grandgousier here effects closure of the deceased's earthly life by shifting the deictic centre from the present moment of utterance (which is where it was earlier when he spontaneously cried 'Ma femme est morte [...]') to an imagined future moment at which an onlooker will read the inscription on Badebec's tomb, viewing her life as belonging to a different time. With this shift from the Passé Composé of grief to the Passé Simple of monumentalization, all trace of Badebec is henceforth removed from the earthbound narrative, which can now progress into Pantagruel's early childhood.

But if Pantagruel's mother Badebec has no subsequent vestigial presence on earth that affects him, the same is not true of the chronologically more remote ancestor whose tomb Pantagruel soon visits:

19 For these two, see *Tiers livre*, 677; *Quart livre*, 1025–31.
20 *Pantagruel*, 317.

> En après, lisant les belles chroniques de ces ancêtres, trouva que Geoffroy de Lusignan, dit Geoffroy à la grand dent, [...] était enterré à Maillezays, dont prit un jour campos pour le visiter comme homme de bien. Et partant de Poitiers avec aucuns de ses compagnons, passèrent par Legugé, par Lusignan, [...] par Fontenay le Comte; et de là arrivèrent à Maillezays, où visita le sépulchre du dit Geoffroy à la grand dent, dont il eut quelque peu de frayeur voyant sa portraiture, car il y est [PR] en image comme un homme furieux, tirant à demi son grand malchus de la guaine. Et demandait la cause de ce. Les chanoines du dit lieu lui dirent que n'était autre cause sinon que Pictoribus atque Poëtis etc., c'est-à-dire que les Paintres et Poëtes ont liberté de paindre à leur plaisir ce qu'ils veulent. Mais ils ne se contenta de leur réponse, et dit: Il n'est point ainsi paint sans cause. Et me doute que à sa mort on lui a fait [PC] quelque tort, duquel il demande [PR] vengeance à ses parents. Je m'en enquêterai plus à plein et en ferai ce que de raison.[21]

This evocation of posthumous presence must have seemed particularly powerful to contemporary readers because the figure it adds to Pantagruel's ancestry was originally a real, historical one (from three centuries previously), about whom vivid myths had long been told (especially for about a century and a half) and printed (for about half a century), and whose stone effigy really does seem to have been on in the church of the Abbey of Maillezais (on a cenotaph or on the entrance), where Rabelais had certainly seen it during his time in Poitou (and at Maillezais), although the actual remains of the baron in question, Geoffroy de Lusignan (c. 1190–1248), seem to have been in the nearby Church of Vouvent, not in Maillezais as Rabelais here claims, as also had the troubadour poet Coudrette.[22]

21 Ibid., 325.

22 On the historical and mythical dimensions of Geoffroy de Lusignan, see Richard Cooper, 'L'Histoire en fête: les humanistes promoteurs de la gloire du Poitou', in *Les Grands Jours de Rabelais en Poitou: actes du colloque international de Poitiers (30 août–1er septembre 2001)*, ed. Marie-Luce Demonet with the collaboration of Stéphan Geonget (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2006), 13–14; Charles Farcinet, *Geoffroy La Grand'dent et l'ancienne famille de Lusignan: le roman et l'histoire* (Niort: Lemercier & Alliot, 1895); Jean Plattard, *L'Adolescence de Rabelais en Poitou* (Paris: Les Belles-Lettres, 1923), 5, 31–3, 36, 46–7; F. Rabelais, *Œuvres [...]: tome troisième: Pantagruel: Prologue–Chapitres I–XI*, ed. Abel Lefranc (Paris: Édouard Champion, 1922), 53–4 nn. 23–4; Myriam White-Le Goff, 'Et si Mélusine et Geoffroy la Grande Dent étaient des géants?' *Cahiers de Recherches médiévales*, 13 (2006), 305–13.

In Rabelais's narration, troubling tense-forms emerge from the Passé Simple backdrop: a striking instance of the Passé Composé ('on lui a fait quelque tort'), which makes an unspecified traumatic past event straddle Geoffroy's death and emerge into the present as unfinished business (in a way that *on lui fit* would not have); and two instances of the Présent ('il y est en image', 'duquel il demande vengeance') that are striking because they are predicated not of Geoffroy's spirit or soul or pseudo-presence or memory or stone likeness, but simply of *him*. What gives the Présent a disturbing force, reflected in Pantagruel's fearful reaction, is the absence of any conceptual precision about the mode of afterlife that Geoffroy may or may not be enjoying here, despite the abundant availability of such conceptual frameworks in the period. The Présent of 'il demande vengeance' expresses a sense of a demand made by a dead person that is all the more disturbing for being epistemologically vague and uncertain, rather like the apparition of the prophet Samuel in Jean de La Taille's tragedy *Saül le Furieux* (published in 1572).

So, refusing to join the Maillezais canons or indeed religious reformers in separating aesthetics from real presence and in accepting that images cannot themselves contain any intelligent life, Pantagruel follows instead the reflexes of traditional popular Catholicism and insists on attributing a communicative intention to Geoffroy-as-embodied-in-the-lifesized-statue. The Présent represents the terrifying, open-ended immediacy of a real visual artefact, of which a fragment (the stone head) seems moreover to have survived into our own present.[23] If this stone head has become less terrifying than the statue of which it was a part in Rabelais's day, that is not just because it is severed from its body and literally eroded, but also because its spatial, historical, and imaginary ties to violence have now been largely severed and eroded. By contrast, Pantagruel and Rabelais saw the head attached to the stone body that was itself attached to the very abbey that the real Geoffroy de Lusignan had rebuilt after burning it down in

23 See Émile Breuillac and C. Girard, *Musée départemental (ancien Hôtel de Ville)[,] Niort: catalogue du musée lapidaire* (Niort: no publ., 1913), no. 135, 39; Plattard, *L'Adolescence*, 33.

a rage against the monks; these notorious events are alluded to later in *Pantagruel*, again in the context of posthumous existence, when Epistemon encounters Geoffroy in the Underworld as a ... *match*-seller.[24] Moreover, whether or not it was the real Geoffroy who had his statue mounted in the rebuilt abbey, by Rabelais's time there was a longstanding belief that it was, which establishes in this episode the material nature of the connection to the violent baron's mind.[25] Pantagruel's fear, mentioned immediately after Geoffroy's huge tooth, is implicitly induced by the tooth as well as by the baron's fury and sword. Rabelais's mention of the tooth was probably provoked not by the stone head itself (which today no longer has a protruding tooth and may never have done) but by the mythic attributes that Geoffroy had acquired in France and beyond as the most notable son of Mélusine who, half serpent and half fairy, had been written into the Lusignan family ancestry by Jean d'Arras (late-fourteenth century) and Coudrette (early-fifteenth). Geoffroy's tusk-like tooth is a sign of his strange origins; it is associated with the violence he metes out in d'Arras's romance (printed in adapted form from 1478 onwards) and in the selective adaptation of it, devoted only to Geoffroy's adventures, which was printed as a chivalric romance from the late-1520s onwards.[26]

The Présent therefore represents a violent menace as crystallized in tangible, visible matter and place. Yet the episode's strangeness resides in the way that this menace attracts rather than repels Pantagruel; it makes him attend to what he takes to be Geoffroy's claim on him. Their consanguinity points to resemblances between them: d'Arras's Geoffroy à la grand'Dent, while not actually a giant, is giant-like in his feats, which surpass

24 *Pantagruel*, 307. See Cooper, 'L'Histoire en fête', 14.

25 'Et Gieffroy demoura a Lusegnen, qui depuis ce fist moult de bien et fist Malleréz l'abbaye refaire plus grande et plus puissant qu'elle n'avoit esté devant, et y mist Gieffroy.vj^xx. moines et les renta bien [...]. Et se fist Gieffroy figurer a la porte, du hault et de grant de lui, et au plus prez que on le pot faire de sa semblance': Jean d'Arras, *Mélusine ou la noble histoire de Lusignan*, ed. and trans. Jean-Jacques Vincensini (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 2003), 778, 780.

26 For the date of the earliest editions, see *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: le XVIe siècle*, ed. Michel Simonin et al. (Paris: Fayard, 2001), 554.

the superhuman quality standardly attributed to knights; he is wise too; and unlike his eight siblings (who founded illustrious lineages), but like Pantagruel, he has no issue.[27] So this episode is a fleeting representation of a mode of posthumous survival very different from the calm 'transmutations' of a soul from one generation to the next that Gargantua will describe a few pages later.[28] Having had no son to avenge him immediately, Geoffroy à la grand'Dent furiously demands vengeance from a descendant who is doing some ancestral tourism three centuries later. But revenge for what? Near the end of his life the real Geoffroy de Lusignan underwent humiliations following his part in the failed rebellion of his cousin, Hugues X, against the King of France, Louis IX (Saint Louis).[29] Rabelais may be referring to that. In any case, the unfinished state of being wronged continues, thanks to the perfectal Passé Composé 'lui a fait'. Pantagruel does not avenge his ancestor, despite his future-tense promises. The episode remains unresolved and ends abruptly, since the next sentence has him resuming his tour of universities ('Ainsi retourna non pas à Poitiers [...]').[30] In contrast to Pantagruel's cordoned-off dead mother, this ancestor continues to communicate to the living his disturbing fury.

A little later, Pantagruel's university tour concludes in Paris with receipt of the letter from his father Gargantua. When read as following on from the representations of the afterlives of Badebec and Geoffroy à la Grand'Dent, Gargantua's evocation of his own future life after death comes over as more complete and harmonious. Unlike Badebec (because she is a woman) and unlike Geoffroy (because he is childless), Gargantua will remain visible in this world in his son. Unlike Geoffroy, who remains exclusively and furiously focused on earthly battles in which he is now (as it were) toothless, Gargantua will also accede to an eschatological plane,[31] even

27 On all these qualities of Geoffroy in d'Arras's version, but with no mention of Rabelais, see White-Le Goff, 'Et si Mélusine'. On the historical Geoffroy's lack of legitimate heirs, see Farcinet, 'Geoffroy la Grand'dent', 4.

28 *Pantagruel*, 343.

29 See Farcinet, 'Geoffroy la Grand'dent', 3–4.

30 *Pantagruel*, 325.

31 Ibid., 343.

if that receives less emphasis than his earthly continuation. And whereas even Geoffroy's continued visibility in this world is as stone, Gargantua's will be as flesh. If Geoffroy survives in some sense, it is in a state of moral as well as literal petrification, in contrast to Gargantua's survival in his animate son. The contrast between stone and flesh probably has implicit biblical resonance: after all, in the later *Tiers livre* Panurge will contrast dead stones ('pierres mortes') with the live ones of the children he imagines engendering ('pierres vives, ce sont hommes').[32] In *Pantagruel*, the contrastive association between Geoffroy and Gargantua is in any case indicated by the central application of the term 'image' to each: Geoffroy 'y est en image', whereas Gargantua describes his son as 'mon image visible en ce monde' and as 'l'image de mon corps'.

Whether the image is stone or flesh, Rabelais envisages in these two episodes an *integral* reduplication – or re-presentation, in the strong sense of the term – of the deceased's body, providing a greater sense of wholeness in posthumous continuity than is suggested by the vestigial material and bodily fragments evoked in the frozen words episode. In Gargantua's letter this image of the son's body containing the father's soul is grounded above all in the Gospel (St John), probably via Erasmus.[33] So far as tense is concerned, it is the Présent in particular that supports the lexis and corporeal imagery of posthumous survival:

> quand [...] mon âme laissera cette habitation humaine, je ne me réputerai [F] totalement mourir, ains passer d'un lieu en autre, attendu que en toi et par toi je *demeure* [PR] en mon *image* visible en ce monde, vivant, voyant, et conversant entre gens de honneur et mes amis comme je soulois [IMP]; [...]. Parquoi, ainsi comme en toi *demeure* [PR] *l'image* de mon corps, si pareillement ne reluisaient [IMP] les moeurs de l'âme, l'on ne te jugerait [COND PR] point être garde et thésor de l'immortalité de notre nom; et le plaisir que prendrais [COND PR] ce voyant, serait [COND

32 *Tiers livre*, 587. See the *lapides vivi* of 1 Peter 2.5. Panurge's contrast with dead stones also alludes to St Paul on the letter that kills versus the spirit that gives life (2 Corinthians 3.6–8). On this *Tiers livre* passage, see David M. Posner, 'The Temple of Reading: Architectonic Metaphor in Rabelais', *Renaissance Studies* 17.2 (2003), 257–74 at 268.

33 See Gérard Defaux's note in *Pantagruel*, 344 n. 10.

> PR] petit, considérant que la moindre partie de moi, qui est le corps, *demourerait* [COND PR], et que la meilleure, qui est l'âme, et par laquelle *demeure* [PR] notre nom en bénédiction entre les hommes, serait dégénérante et abâtardie.[34]

The power of the term 'demeure' to assert posthumous presence here derives not just from its lexicalized meaning, from its being in the Présent, and from its occurring three times within a few lines, but also from another use of the grammatical figure of *temporum enallage*. Plain grammar would lead one to expect the first 'demeure' to be *demeurerai* [FUT], following on from 'me réputerai' [FUT]. But by changing the expected Futur into the Présent, Rabelais makes clear that Gargantua has shifted from envisaging his postmortem survival from the standpoint (the deictic centre) of his letter-writing present to envisaging it from the standpoint *of* that future: 'now that I *am* dead, I remain in you'. The trick of perspective produced by this grammatical figure is especially vertiginous here because it entails crossing the divide between life and death. That divide is also spectacularly crossed by the surprising shift in the Futur part of the sentence from the predictable third person ('mon âme laissera cette habitation humaine') to the more surprising first person ('je ne me réputerai totalement mourir'), which posits subjective postmortem consciousness, echoing the more troubled consciousness attributed to Geoffroy.

The *temporum enallage* then continues. The second 'demeure' ('ainsi comme en toi demeure l'image de mon corps') continues to endow this imagined postmortem future with solid presence by figurally substituting a Présent for a Futur. But, from the ensuing clause onwards, a diminution of that postmortem presence is then envisaged through the possibility that Pantagruel will be an inadequate vessel for his father's soul. This disturbance is also partly communicated through tense-switching, which undermines the projection of presence onto the imagined postmortem future: according to plain grammar, since the main verb is Présent, one would expect the conditional meaning to be expressed by the Futur: 'ainsi comme en toi demeure l'image de mon corps, si pareillement ne [*reluisent* PR] les moeurs de l'âme, l'on ne te [*jugera* FUT] point être garde et thésor

34 *Pantagruel*, 343–5 [my italics].

de l'immortalité de notre nom', and so on. However, by switching instead to the Imparfait ('reluisaient') and the Conditionnel Présent ('jugerait'), Rabelais makes this prospect seem more remote. He still manages to find space for one more Présent 'demeure', this time communicating a general truth about postmortem survival. Thus some of the passage's rhetorical power derives not so much from this simple indicative Présent being a mantra of postmortem survival as from its partly awkward juxtposition with the surrounding tense-forms, that momentarily turns 'demeure' into what Linacre would call a grammatical figure.

So tenses serve in these three near-contiguous episodes of *Pantagruel* both to channel the dead's posthumous presence in conceptually reassuring ways and also to convey what one might call pre-conceptual overflow from those channels. Even Gargantua's letter, which seems at first glance to offer a more complete and harmonious version of posthumous survival, envisages the process going awry, if not quite so disturbingly as in the case of Geoffroy à la Grand'Dent.